

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Italy-United States Tax Convention September 21, 1999

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith for Senate advice and consent to ratification the Convention Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Italian Republic for the Avoidance of Double Taxation with Respect to Taxes on Income and the Prevention of Fraud or Fiscal Evasion, signed at Washington on August 25, 1999, together with a Protocol. Also transmitted are an exchange of notes with a Memorandum of Understanding and the report of the Department of State concerning the Convention.

This Convention, which is similar to tax treaties between the United States and other devel-

oped nations, provides maximum rates of tax to be applied to various types of income and protection from double taxation of income. The Convention also provides for resolution of disputes and sets forth rules making its benefits unavailable to residents that are engaged in treaty-shopping or certain abusive transactions.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to this Convention and that the Senate give its advice and consent to ratification.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
September 21, 1999.

Remarks at a Reception for Congressional Candidate Regina Montoya Coggins

September 21, 1999

The President. I was hoping Regina would speak, since I'm so hoarse. [*Laughter*]

I've spent all day at the United Nations, and I'm delighted to see all of you—Texans, Washingtonians, Michigans—Michiganders—[*laughter*]—

Audience member. New Hampshire. [*Laughter*]

The President. —and whoever came from New Hampshire—

Audience member. I did.

The President. —we can give you one night off between now and—[*laughter*].

Let me say, first of all, I am delighted that Lloyd and Libby have opened their beautiful home and let me come in through the kitchen. [*Laughter*] I'm delighted that Regina is running for Congress. Most of you know that she was, first, Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs; she's had a distinguished career in the nonprofit sector as a lawyer; and she did great in the White House; and she's been my friend a long time. Her husband has been a distinguished United States attorney in Texas. So she is supremely well-qualified to go to Con-

gress. We are just a few seats away from being in the majority, and this should be one of them.

I just want to make three brief points. I have to take care of my voice a little bit, but I think it's worth your saying this to people all over America as the election season begins.

When we started in 1992, we made an argument to the American people. We said, "Look, the country's in the worst recession since the Great Depression. The social divisions in this country are deepening. The basically antigovernment philosophy that had dominated the last 12 years masked a growth in the Federal Government and a profligate explosion in the Federal debt." And we were in trouble. So we said, "Give us a chance, and we'll cut the deficit until we get rid of it. That'll drive down interest rates and bring jobs. We will expand trade, because we're only 4 percent of the world's people, and we've got 22 percent of the world's income, so we have to sell something to somebody else. And we will find a way to do this and continue to invest in the education of our children and the other things that bring us together." That's why we say it was an argument. We said, "We believe it'll work." And enough

people agreed with us that the Vice President and I were elected.

None of what has happened in the last 6½ years-plus would have been possible without the support of the Democrats in the Congress, because we have lived through the most partisan era in my lifetime, even more, I think, if you go back and look at the division of votes and the rhetoric, than the McCarthy era, probably.

But now it's not an argument anymore. We don't have to argue with anybody. It is an established fact that the policies we implemented have given us the longest peacetime expansion in history: millions more jobs than were created during the Reagan boom, which was fueled by massive deficit spending; the biggest surplus we've ever had; lowest minority unemployment in history; the lowest unemployment in 29 years; the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years; and the lowest crime rates in 26 years.

We had some other arguments. We said, "We believed that we ought to do more to help balance work and family. So unlike the previous President, I won't veto the family and medical leave law. I will sign it." And they said, "Oh, if you do that, you will raise the cost of employing people. Small business will go under. It'll cut jobs." Well, we've got 19.4 million jobs, and for 6 years in a row we've set records every year for new small businesses getting started. It's not an argument now; it's a fact.

We said, "We ought to—unlike the previous administration, I would sign, not veto, the Brady bill." And I thought we ought to ban assault weapons. They told all the hunters and sportsmen they'd lose their guns, and everything would be miserable. And nobody who shouldn't have a gun would have any difficulty getting one. Now we know 400,000 people didn't get guns because of the Brady bill. We know that nobody's hunting or sport shooting has been interrupted. And we know we've got the lowest crime rate in 26 years. So it's not an argument anymore; it's an established fact.

I say that because every election is always about change, and it should be. This country should never stand pat, even when it's working. The question will be not whether the election is about change, whether it's a Presidential election, a Senate election, or an election for the House of Representatives. The question will be: What kind of change are we for, and are we going to build on what works, or take it down?

That is the issue. Therefore, every single race for the House of Representatives is a race that matters enormously to the people who live in that district and also will have huge implications for the United States as a whole.

So now we're having a new debate, where we say, "Look, before we squander this surplus it took us 30 years to get back—last one we had was 30 years ago, and we never had one this big—shouldn't we take account of the fact that the number of people over 65 is going to double in the next 30 years, that there'll only be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security and Medicare? Shouldn't we take account of the fact that Social Security is supposed to go broke in a little over 30 years and Medicare in 15 years? Shouldn't we fix Social Security and Medicare? Shouldn't we give the elderly people of this country access to prescription drugs, since if we were starting Medicare today, we'd certainly cover drugs, because it substitutes for so many medical procedures? Before we give all this surplus away, shouldn't we figure out what we've got to invest in education and health care and the environment and medical research and science and technology, the things that will keep us strong in hope? And shouldn't we—since we know lower debt leads to lower interest rates, higher growth, and higher incomes—shouldn't we get this country out of debt over the next 15 years for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President?"

Now, in the Fifth Congressional District in Texas, if what we're fighting for comes to pass, the elderly will be better off; the children will be better off; the poor will be better off; the middle class will be better off. And the Republicans will have more money to give to their candidates in the 2002 election. [Laughter] You know, when I see how much money they're raising, it's just testimony to how successful our economic policy is. [Laughter]

And so I say that, because this is—it's something that's very important for people to realize. And we haven't done all this work, to get the country up to the point where it's working, to go into reverse. We need to continue to change, but we need to change from the base of what is working.

There's still a lot of poor people in this country. There's still too many poor children in this country. There's still places, from the Indian reservations to the Mississippi Delta to the inner

cities to the rural farming communities and the little towns that have lost their industries, that haven't felt this recovery. There are still too many working people who don't have any insurance for their children. There are still significant environmental challenges. There are still enormous opportunities out there. We're trying to get funding for the next generation of the Internet, because it's becoming so clogged. The fastest growing instrument of human communication in history. Everyone knows we need a next generation; everyone knows we need some Government money to fund the basic investment. Their party's against funding it; our party's for it. We want to rehabilitate 6,000 schools. They want to rehabilitate 600 schools. We want to put 100,000 teachers out there to make classes smaller so our children will learn more. They don't want to do that.

There are significant differences. They are huge. And they will affect the lives of every family in America.

So what I want you to say is that every race is important. This one's really important, and she is superbly qualified. That we now are not making an argument to the American people; we are taking the evidence to them. And we

have to remind them of what it was like before, so they can remember the difference.

It really matters who's in the Congress, and what decisions are made on any given issue. And as someone who—probably I'm the only person in this room that can't run for office again, or for the first time—[laughter]—my interest is seeing my country do well. That's what I want.

Yes, I think the world of Regina, and yes, I feel very loyal to my party. But we have delivered for this country, and there is so much more to do. There are still vulnerable people. There are still unseized opportunities. And there's still a lot of change to make, but it needs to be the right kind. And if you want it made, you need to send her to Congress.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:14 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts Representative Lloyd Doggett and his wife, Elizabeth; and Mrs. Coggins' husband, Paul Coggins, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Texas. Mrs. Coggins is a candidate for Congress in Texas' Fifth Congressional District. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 22.

Remarks on the United States Lawsuit Against Major Tobacco Companies and an Exchange With Reporters

September 22, 1999

The President. Good afternoon. Last January, in my State of the Union Address, I announced that the Justice Department was preparing a litigation plan to recover the costs of smoking-related illnesses. Over the years, smoking-related illnesses have cost taxpayers billions of dollars through Medicare, veterans' health, and other Federal health programs.

Today the Justice Department declared that the United States is, in fact, filing suit against the major tobacco companies to recover the cost borne by taxpayers. I believe it's the right thing to do. The tobacco companies should answer to the taxpayers for their actions. The taxpayers of our country should have their day in court.

Thank you very much.

Q. Mr. President, the tobacco companies say this lawsuit is pure politics, sir. What do you say?

The President. Well, if you look at the record of this administration, we've been out there on this issue a very long time. No one else ever tried to do that. We did our best to work with them and with the Congress to resolve many of these matters legislatively, and they declined. And I believe this is the appropriate thing to do.

North Korean Moratorium on Missile Testing

Q. Do you think the North Koreans, sir, are going to stick to their moratorium on missile testing now, after the lifting of sanctions?